

# Landscape Scale Restoration Project Report



**Project Name:** Cle Elum Collaborative Landscape and Community Resilience

**Funding Year:** 2022

## Stakeholders

Forest Service Region: USDA Forest Service - R6

Sponsoring Organization: Washington Forestry

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Participating Organizations:

Grantee: Washington Forestry

## Project Funding

Agreement(s): 22-DG-11062765-725

## Project Design

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## Project Purpose

This project accelerates momentum on the 2020 Forest Action Plan landscape resilience goals through a collaborative effort by contributing key resources to improve forest and community resilience at multiple scales. This project focuses on sustainable, landscape-scale impact through ecologically based thinning and cross-boundary prescribed (Rx) burning on strategic acres across multiple land ownerships in the high-risk Cle Elum priority landscape. Grant funds will leverage state resources with local labor and contractors to meet objectives for restoration, risk reduction, wildland fire suppression, and community resilience. This work is complemented by deliberate community education and landowner outreach through the combined efforts of Kittitas Fire Adapted Communities Coalition and partners.

## Resource Objective

### **Primary Objective**

- Reduce the risk of uncharacteristic wildfires

### **Secondary Objective(s)**

- Improve important forest ecosystems

## Strategic Issues

The dry forests of Washington's eastern central Cascade mountains are facing a crisis - past management practices and forest health issues are putting the regions forests and towns at risk. The Jolly Mountain Fire swept through the region in 2017; burning more than 35,000 acres and threatening over 2,500 homes and lives. In response, the community unified to work together to face the future with more wildfire.

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## Collaboration & Partners

Project implementation focuses on cross-boundary forest health treatments on municipal and private land within well-established scientific and collaborative foundation in the region to catalyze restoration work across all-lands on an accelerated timeline. There are 8 partners implementing this proposal in coordination with KFACC members. Priority areas for forest health treatment have been identified by state-led analysis and span diverse ownerships. The 365 acres of forest health treatments in this project are part of a strategic effort by the Tapash Sustainable Forest Collaborative, KFACC, and implementation of DNR's 20-Year Forest Health Strategic Plan and Forest Action Plan to leverage resources to do the right thing in the right place at the right scale. Each treatment has been strategically selected for landscape-scale impact to capitalize on previous investments, and reduce future wildfire impacts. The Nature Conservancy will treat 100 acres of forestland, building off investments made in adjacent acres in cost-share with DNR implementing best practices for landscape scale restoration (e.g., PODs). Rx burning and native seeding in the Roslyn Urban Forest (RUF) reduces fuels and restores forest health within the wildland urban interface to the rural City of Roslyn. This work will be collaboratively implemented with the City, RFD, DNR, and local fuels crew; investing in the local economy and directly implementing a local, long-term forest management plan; reducing risk from wildfire and flood events in the forest above Roslyn. Rx burn implementation, monitoring, and communications will be in concert with the Washington Rx Fire Council to shared learning. Formed in 2007 the Tapash Sustainable Forest Collaborative was established with an MOU between DNR, USDA Forest Service, WA Department of Fish and Wildlife, The Nature Conservancy, and Yakama Nation to manage land across all public ownerships on over 3 million acres in WA east Cascades. KFACC is a grassroots organization fostering collaboration and resiliency to fire in the County. This project is primarily cross boundary forest health treatments in the highest risk area in this priority area, and provides a strategic fuel break adjacent to large state and national forest lands that have high values at risk from wildfire (e.g., endangered species habitat, recreational assets, and source water for the drought vulnerable Yakima basin). Through the Tapash Sustainable Forest Collaborative and shared stewardship, land managers and partners are developing landscape scale forest health treatments for these public lands in their 5 year plans of work.

## Integrated Delivery

The 109,396 acre Cle Elum priority landscape combines high fire risk along the northern and southern ridges with extensive development in the valley and foothills. Forest ownership is dominated by private landowners (56%), Forest Service (24%), Central Cascades Forest LLC managed by TNC (15%), and DNR (5%). Based on DNR data from a science-driven landscape evaluation, at least 15,500 acres of dense forest is recommended for treatment to reduce fire risk to communities and transition forests in this priority landscape to a more resilient state. KFACC and local wildfire planning efforts have scaled up to cultivate cultural change to live with wildfire and reduce risk around private property. The goals of this collaborative project align to address strategies established statewide and locally that intersect in this priority location, including the Forest Action Plan, 10-Year WA Wildland Fire Strategic Plan, Tapash Sustainable Forest Collaborative Strategic Plan, Kittitas County CWPP, and KFACC Strategic Plan.

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## Influence on Positive Change

This project's design is for short-term deliverables in a priority landscape that are sustained and amplified over time on the landscape and in community. Treatments implement the 20-Year Health Forest Strategic Plan, which includes a multi-party monitoring framework that ensures the treatments are tracked for maintenance and within the context of changing forest conditions. This strategic plan displays the strong commitment to not only the initial implementation of treatments, but long-term condition. Prescribed fire burning will provide training opportunities for local fire crews, while developing a model of Prescribed Fire Burn Associations that can lower long-term maintenance costs and improve effectiveness. The Prescribed Fire Training Exchange program has in this area since 2017 and will continue to support maintenance burning. The town of Roslyn has started a fuels crew that can assist in this maintenance along with TNC and the DNR. The purposeful and holistic project components in community engagement and implementation of work with established partnerships ensures the transfer of knowledge amongst landowners in this landscape at multiple scales, and community investment in the outcomes. Communication materials including on-site demonstrations will occur through this project, while they will be integrated into the discussions and knowledge exchange of the KFACC alongside other projects in the county.

## **Accomplishments**

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## Deliverables

Activity 1 and Activity 2 will result in 100 acres of mechanical thinning and 240 acres of combination mechanical treatments and prescribed fire. This work will accelerate the pace and scale of forest restoration consistent with Washington's Forest Action Plan (FAP) goals outlined for landscape resilience to prioritize forest health treatments in landscapes with the highest need and relative risk. Specifically, this work is focused on restoring forest condition, reducing fuels, and meeting FAP direction to increase treatments, targeting high-risk wildland urban interface areas and associated access roads and highways to increase firefighter and public safety and protect communities. As of October 2024, 168 acres of the 340 acre project comprising of a combination of mechanical treatments and prescribed fire fuels reduction work has been completed and the remainder of this work is in progress.

Activity 3 will complete 25 acres of pre-commercial thinning to reduce wildfire risk near private property infrastructure. This provides additional technical assistance from non-DNR (e.g. KCCD) source that will reach different sectors of the community and benefit in treating 25 acres of private land fuels reduction. This work meets the FAP direction in priority landscapes to work with landowners to coordinate activities across borders and select the most effective treatment approaches to meet the needs of the landscape and landowner objectives while also addressing the Community Wildfire Preparedness goals. Activity 3 work is to be completed by December 30 2024.

Activity 4, as guided by the FAP, will result in minimum 10 planning meetings and efforts to develop shovel-ready treatments that have community consensus among diverse stakeholders around implementing further landscape scale treatments. This planning capacity will help move forward future treatments with the dual benefit of restoring forests while reducing high intensity wildfires near the WUI in Roslyn-Cle Elum area. This will strengthen 8 partnerships and build new relationships between other interest groups (e.g. recreation, checkboard partnerships) in the priority area to implement future work. This activity will also utilize the DNRs online Forest Health Tracker to facilitate strategic cross-boundary planning of treatments and transparently track progress by spatially tracking the location, timing, and type of individual treatments which add up to cumulative change. As of October 2024, Activity 4 is complete.

Activity 5 will support outcomes outlined by Activity 2 and FAP goals for priority actions for prescribed fire, specifically facilitating an interagency prescribed fire training program that will provide an estimated 15 live-fire training days and 30 position taskbook training assignments. As of October 2024, Activity 5 is complete

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## Accomplishments to Date

Activities 1 & 2: 340-acres comprising a combination of mechanical treatments and prescribed fire fuels reduction work is complete.

Activity 3 to complete 25 acres of pre-commercial thinning to reduce wildfire risk near private property infrastructure is complete.

Activity 4 is complete and facilitated outreach to 7,500 private residents about wildfire risk reduction and prevention in the project and surrounding areas.

Activity 5, facilitating an interagency prescribed fire training program that will provide an estimated 15 live-fire training days and 30 position task book training assignments, is complete.

## Quantities to Date

- Hazardous Fuels Management - 340 Acres treated to reduce hazardous fuels

## Deliverables in Progress

This project is complete.

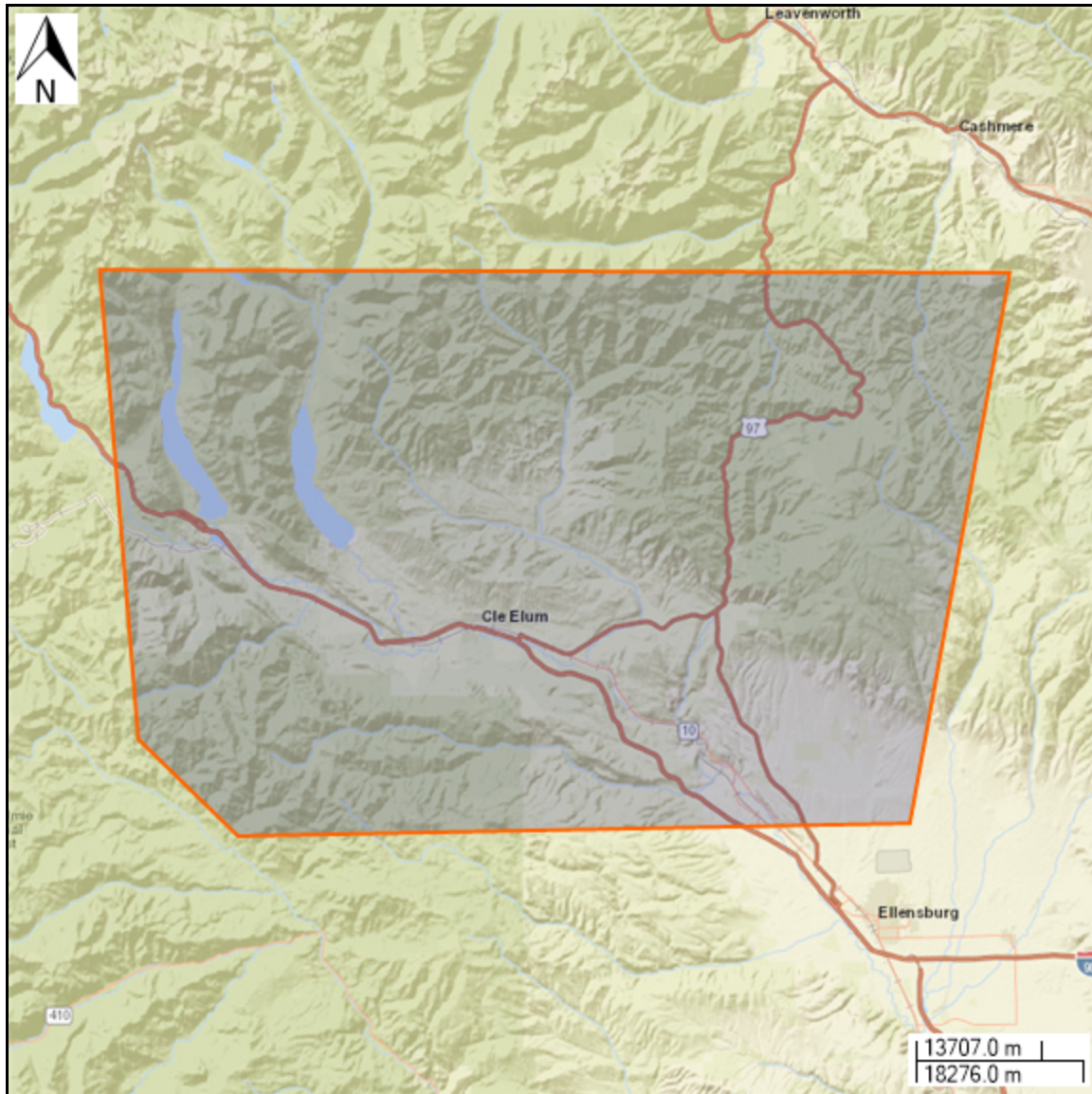
## Challenges

No challenges to report.

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## Impact Area



**Information Last Updated**  
3/3/2026